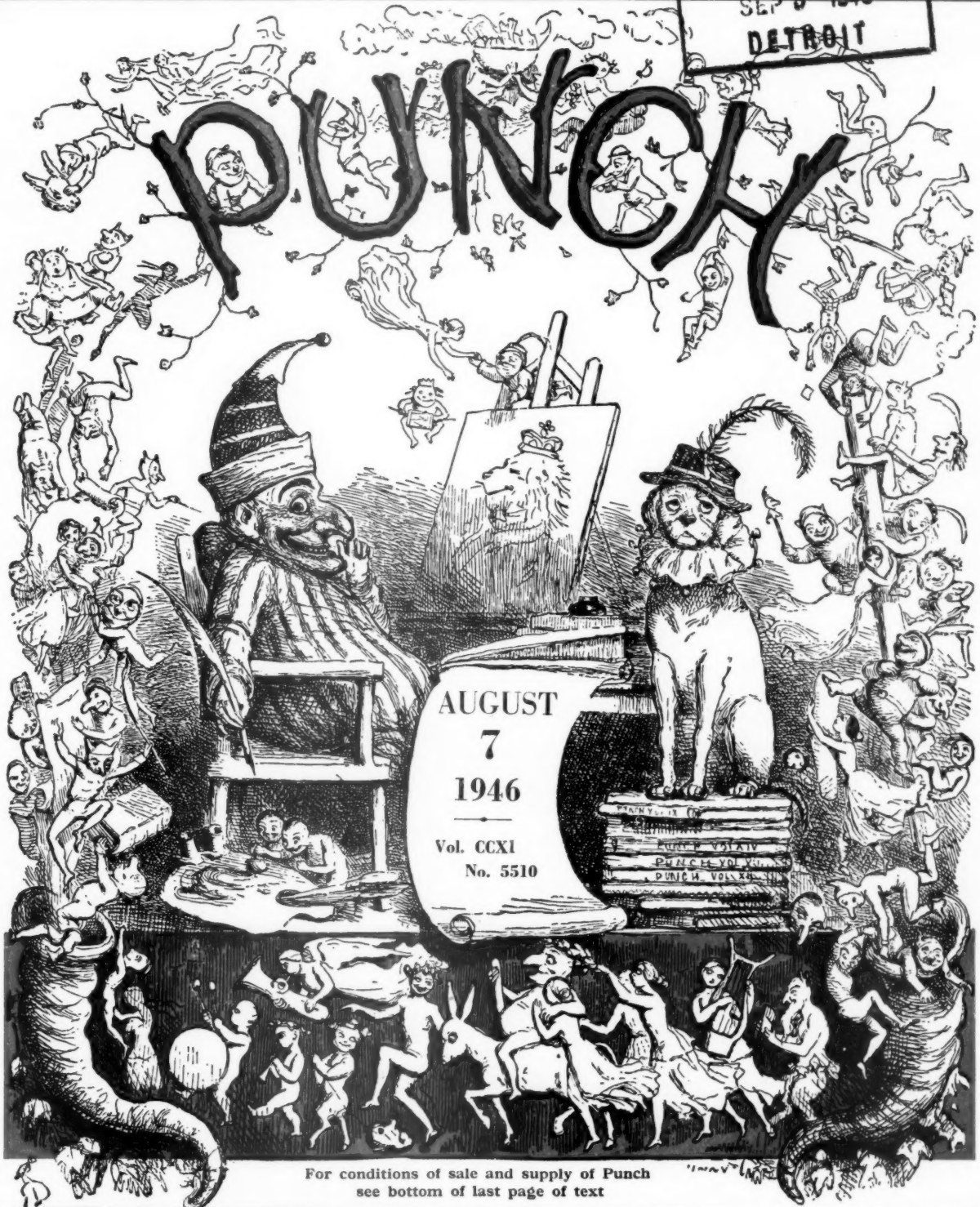


HUNTLEY & PALMERS - the first name you think of in **BISCUITS**

SEP 6 1946
DETROIT



For conditions of sale and supply of Punch
see bottom of last page of text

SAY *Player's* Please

AND THE PLEASURE'S YOURS





Courtaulds

RAYON

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FOUR SQUARE

There's a reason why they satisfy!

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PLAIN OR CORK-TIPPED





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Make 'Ovaltine' Cold your constant stand-by during the warm summer days. This scientific combination of Nature's best foods will help to restore strength and energy and maintain your fitness at a high level.

'Ovaltine' Cold is easily and quickly prepared. Just add 'Ovaltine' to cold milk, or milk and water, and mix thoroughly with a whisk, or in a shaker.

P.661A


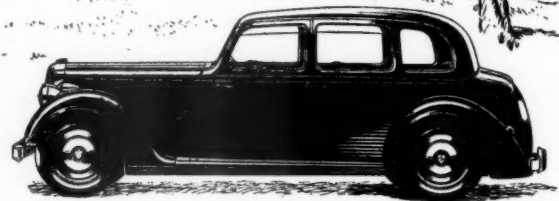
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The Purest Spirit made



*No pen is there like it,
for smoothness and flow!
Its name, so world-famous,
you're certain to know*



When parties
are parties
we shall again have
Schweppes



**IT'S GRAND
TO HAVE
MARTELL**

AGAIN!

*There's no better drink
than Fine Brandy*



*Of bad work there
are no traces
To be found in
Paton's Laces.*



From your retailer

P.4

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How
to be a
well-
dressed
Wedge
shoe
by 'Meltonian'



A word to the wedge! If a woman feels comfortable when she's well-dressed, so does a shoe. If you two wedge shoes are well-dressed with Meltonian Cream, you'll stay comfy for years. What's that? You're a bit off colour? I'll keep you supple, shapely, and shining gaily in your true colours. If it's the last squeak that comes out of you, murmur 'Meltonian' to your mistress!

Meltonian

SHOE CREAM

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MAXIMUM RETAIL PRICE
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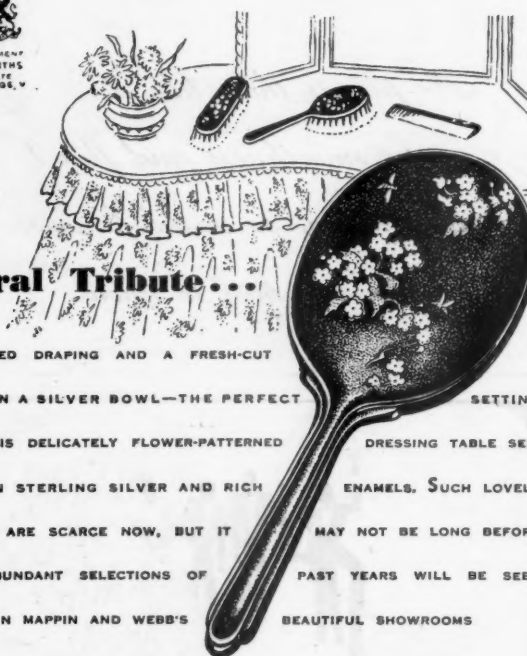
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DRESSING TABLE SER-

VICE IN STERLING SILVER AND RICH

ENAMELS, SUCH LOVELY

THINGS ARE SCARCE NOW, BUT IT

MAY NOT BE LONG BEFORE

THE ABUNDANT SELECTIONS OF

PAST YEARS WILL BE SEEN

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JELLIES, ICES AND
PUDDINGS **MUCH**
MORE EXCITING

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Unparalleled SERVICE

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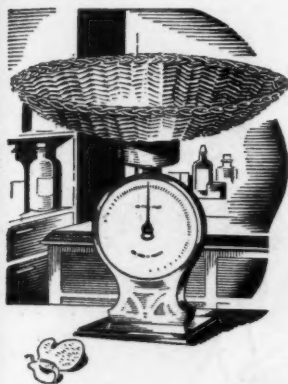
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DRAWING PENCILS
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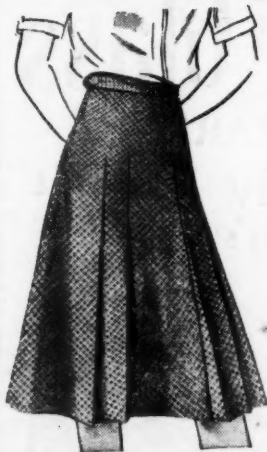


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WITH YOUR NEW



HOLIDAY PLAY SUIT

*Workaday skin
isn't worn*

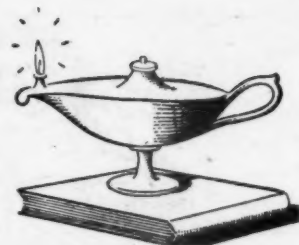
Prepare your skin for its summer-time unveiling. Treat hands, face and body twice daily with Hinds Honey & Almond Cream. Hinds—the nearest approach to the natural oils of your skin—cleanses clogged pores, soothes and freshens the skin; and is the perfect non-greasy powder base. Keep Hinds handy.



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*"In the present
state of medical
knowledge..."*

Exactly how exhausted nerves are revitalized by the special combination which is found only in 'Sanatogen' Nerve Tonic has never been fully explained, any more than the ultimate 'why' of Penicillin or of the Sulphonamides. The important thing is that 'Sanatogen' does renew exhausted vitality and soothe jangled nerves. Ask for 'Sanatogen' Nerve Tonic at your chemist's.

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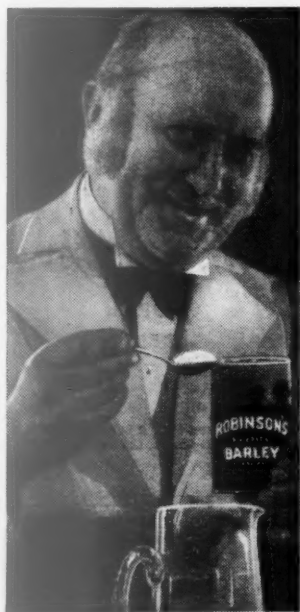
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ATKINSONS Eau de Cologne

THE EAU DE COLOGNE OF FINEST QUALITY

AEC 155-96

J. & E. ATKINSON LTD.



WHAT!
Another jugful,
Miss?

says OLD HETHERS

Well, you young folk seem to know what's good for you—It's mighty lucky I got in that extra tin of Robinson's. You see, it's so simple to make good barley water from Robinson's 'Patent' Barley if you follow the instructions. Goodness me, if I were using that old-fashioned 'pearl' stuff I'd be boiling and stewing and straining all the day long. No, give me Robinson's 'Patent' Barley every time—till I can buy their barley water in bottles again

Barley Water from
ROBINSON'S
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CVS-38



Gulls wheel slaty-white against deep-blue sky, while Yachts ride, trim and gallant, amid the glinting sparkle of sunlit sea. Our companionable Ford carries us coastwards to windy cliff, to shingled cove, or coolly shadowed caves.

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Monk & Glass

CUSTARD

Everybody likes it
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Still the same high quality
Sold by all good grocers.





PUNCH

OR

The London Charivari



Vol. CCXI No. 5510

August 7 1946

Charivaria

"I SIMPLY can't eat the national loaf," says a dyspeptic correspondent. This is undoubtedly a case for the Food Enforcement Officer.

A resident of Hope Cove, Devon, has a jasmine which grew so fast it entered the front door. Jasmine, of course, should use the tradesmen's entrance.



"Showers, bright intervals; cool. Fair, rather warm."
"Daily Herald."

No thunder or snow?

At the opening of an art gallery in London a visitor noticed that the paint was still wet on some of the pictures. This added realism to the seascapes.

"I live in a cottage I had built for me in 1899 and the roof has never leaked," says a correspondent. It made a good start by sustaining no air-raid damage during the Boer War.

Holiday accommodation is scarcer than ever: visitors are advised not to travel without finding out in advance which hotel is likely to patronize them.

A centenarian says he has drunk beer consistently since 1860. Oh, well, it would probably have been short anyway.

A lady who performed the opening ceremony at a church fête the other day was presented with a basket containing a pound of butter and a dozen eggs as a substitute for the usual bouquet. We are asked to say that a well-known countess is now available to open any class of function, any time or place.

"Meanwhile, the food question appeared again yesterday in the House of Commons, where Sir Waldron Smithers, Conservative, declared that the food shortage 'was not nearly so serious as we are led to believe.'"
Middle-East paper.

We hadn't been worrying, actually.

A dietetic authority claims that meat-eating animals are the most active. Try to remember this when chasing a squirrel up a tree.



There is no truth in the rumour that the Food Minister is contemplating a change in his name to Starchey.

"G.M. FOR WOMAN IN ARRAS"—"Manchester Guardian."
She had better luck than Polonius.

A weekly journal mentions that very few straw boaters are being worn this year. This, of course, gives the Air Ministry the sole right of deciding which way the wind is blowing.



Written in My Study

Friday, August 7th, 1946.

THERE is a calendar on my desk. Would it perhaps be of interest to examine this calendar and see whether we can extract from it any information about the character, habits and position in life of the owner?

Perhaps it would. Such exercises promote the faculty of observation and strengthen the fibres of the mind. They help also to bridge the interminable gap between eleven o'clock coffee and the announcement of lunch.

Spectacles, rings, watches, walking-sticks and hats are well known to be particularly rich in indications, to the trained mind, of their owner's history. "It would be difficult to name any articles," observes Holmes (S.), "which afford a finer field for inference than a pair of glasses"; and in view of the excellent use he made of Anna Coram's pince-nez, few will question his judgment, unless it be to point to Dr. Watson's elder brother's watch, the hat of Mr. Henry Baker, or the walking-stick of James Mortimer, M.R.C.S. But a calendar is by no means so straightforward. I do not recollect that Sherlock Holmes ever exerted himself to wring the secrets from a calendar.

It will be interesting to see what we can do to repair the omission.

The calendar on my desk is provided with a knurled knob at the right- and left-hand extremities of its upper surface—I mean at the top, for the calendar is a rectangular solid measuring some four inches by three, with a depth of one inch. Rotation of the right-hand knob causes a talc screen to move across the face of the calendar, in such a way that any dates no longer required are struck out or obscured by a thick red line. If this is not clear I see no way of making it clearer. The left-hand knob is of course used to draw the talc screen, and with it the red lines, back to the zero position. In a recess in the base of the container is set a third knurled knob which has the extraordinary effect of moving the dates themselves, as opposed to the talc screen, backwards and forwards, so that the figure 1, shall we say, can be set under Sun., Mon., Tue., Wed., Thu., Fri., or Sat., as desired. No knurled knob, I need hardly add, is provided for moving the days of the week, which remain fixed. It will be apparent, so far, that any man with his wits about him who knows the day of the week on which the first of the month fell or is about to fall can set the calendar correctly for that month simply by manipulation of the knobs.

We now come to what is perhaps the most remarkable feature of all. Inside the two knurled knobs on the top of the calendar—nearer to the middle, that is—is a second pair of knobs, similarly knurled, and if these are rotated the name of the month—as it might be, July—appears in a little window above the days of the week. I do not claim, of course, that the *right* month necessarily appears, but I do claim that either the month before or the month after the one showing in the window will arrive according to whether the right or left inner knob is turned. Thus, once the operator knows what month it is *now*, all he has to do at the end of the month is to turn the appropriate knob until another month appears. Of course if June appears instead of August he is turning the wrong knob and must reconsider his actions, while if (as is the case at present) nothing whatever appears, whichever knob he turns, he must conclude that something has got broken and be content to estimate the month from the declination of the sun.

I now proceed to make a number of deductions about the owner.

He is by nature a precise and orderly man, mechanically-minded by inclination but lacking the knowledge to turn this bent to effect. He is subject to fits of abstraction, if not downright idleness, in the course of which his normally methodical habits seem to desert him entirely. It is likely that his fortunes have declined of recent years, but if so his downfall is not due to drink. He is of course a bachelor.

I should just like to say at this point that I am astounded by the scope and accuracy of my own deductions. It seems to me that my powers are more than human. But I dare say, when we have examined the steps that have led to these conclusions, the whole chain of reasoning will appear extremely superficial.

That I am precise and orderly is clear from the fact that the calendar is upon my desk at all. To possess a calendar proves little or nothing, but to keep it deliberately in a place where it may be of some use shows a definite determination not only to know the right date but to be in a position to put it at the head of letters, cheques and so on. And if this is not enough, the fact that the red line has been drawn over quite a number of the figures proves conclusively that a man of method has been at work. Closer observation, however, shows that the red line has gone too far; it ought not, so early in August, to have reached the 19th of the month. The inference is that the knob has not been rotated since the middle of July at the latest, and we are forced to postulate one of those strange attacks of ennui or lethargy to which allusion has been made.

Again, only a mechanically-minded man would willingly have by him a gadget with five knurled knobs; but the failure to mend that part of the mechanism designed to show which month it is argues a quite surprising ignorance of ordinary engineering problems. An attempt has been made, probably with a pair of nail-scissors, to get at the works by removing the face of the calendar, but when that failed a characteristic fit of abstraction seems to have supervened, for no effort has been made to hammer the jagged edges down again.

There begins to emerge, you see, a picture of a mechanically-minded bachelor (the dust, Watson, the dust), well-intentioned, eager to get the date right, wealthy enough at one time to have acquired so ingenious and handsome a calendar, but too poor now to have the maimed apparatus repaired or replaced, and dogged throughout life by a tendency to stop moving the red line along somewhere about the middle of last month. But no drunkard. If you will have the goodness to look at the recess in the bottom of the calendar in which is housed the knob that gets the right day of the week opposite the right dates, you will see that it is wide enough to admit only the tips of the forefinger and thumb. My contention is that an intoxicated person attempting to manipulate this knob would inevitably score and scratch the surrounding surface with his finger-nails. No such scratches are to be found. Very well then. It will surely not be argued that because this particular knob has only to be touched at the end of each month, no case has been made out for the sobriety of the owner throughout the rest of the year? You might just as well say that there is nothing to prove the knob has ever been touched at all.

As a matter of fact I can prove it has been touched—regularly. If it hadn't, how on earth could I have dated this article?

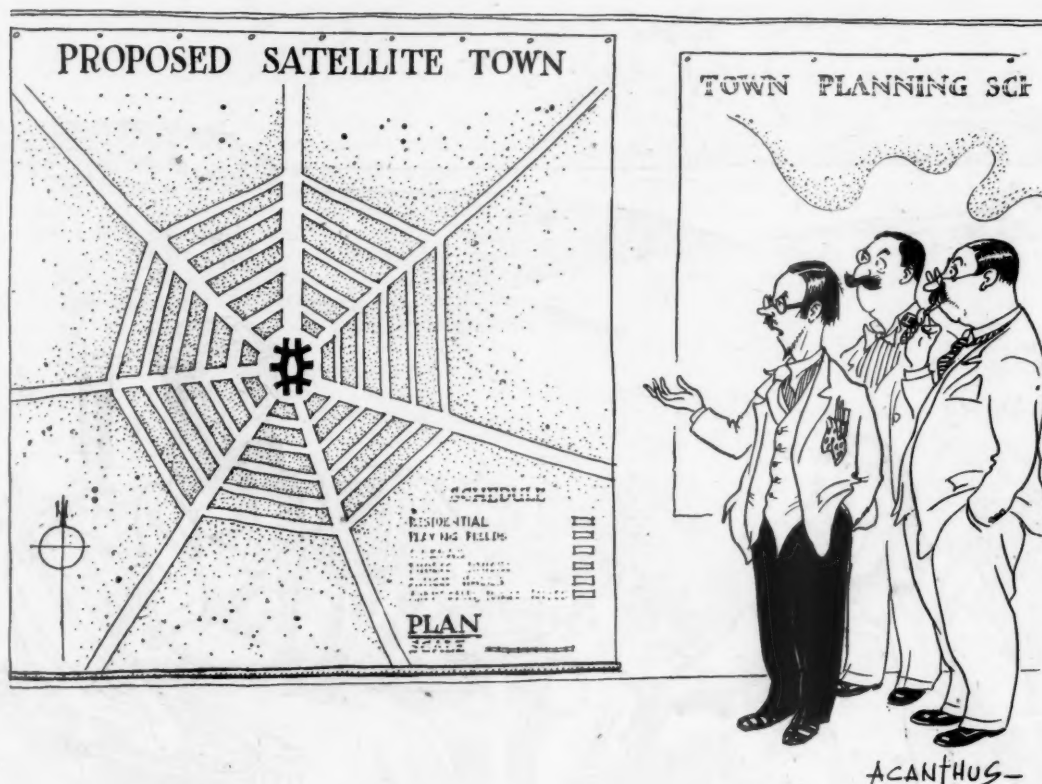
H. F. E.



AN OLD-FASHIONED HOLIDAY

"Run out of coal, I suppose?"

"And who left the sandwiches behind?"



"Of course, the main idea is to attract people."

Table-Talk of Amos Intolerable

XXX

"HE asked whether I was alone," said Amos, narrating a story. "Well, X was with me, so of course I couldn't honestly say 'No.'"

* * * * *

When Amos said, apropos of the American loan, "I can quite see on the whole, you know, why many Americans can't agree that we ought to be stood a loan simply because we stood alone," he didn't seem to think a great deal of the remark himself, but it obviously annoyed him when the rest of us didn't seem to either; and to a man who mildly observed that the crack must have been made before, he said with unexpected warmth "Now how on earth can you know that?"

"I don't say it *has* been said before," replied the objector, irritated. "I simply say it *must* have been."

This roused Amos to a considerable pitch of indignation. He took a deep breath and burst out "And is the general reaction to my remarks to be conditioned by the fact that it is unnecessary to give them any attention because just conceivably—"

"Very probably."

"—they may have been anticipated by—well, bless my

soul," he broke off angrily. "I've said before and I say again—Self-consciousness is the curse of the day. We've just finished the most self-conscious war there ever was and we're stuck in the most self-conscious peace, and now nobody can even snigger at a joke unless he's quite sure it's never been made before. The fact that *he's* never heard it before isn't enough; oh, no, if other people have heard it before they might be contemptuous of him for being amused, so he has to be very careful. Involuntary amusement is dead: every crack has to be considered with a straight face for a few seconds. Is it the *sort* of joke that *might* have occurred to somebody in Baffinland last year, or yesterday, or even five minutes ago? If so, no laugh. Bah! Do you realize where this attitude would lead, pushed to its logical conclusion?"

We thought.

Nobody made any suggestion, and this restored Amos's good humour.

"Because *I* don't," he said cheerfully. "Why should I go to the labour of thinking it out?"

* * * * *

Of a somewhat pedestrian biographer, Amos said that

each life he wrote included "about as many surprises as the judge's final address to the prisoner."

* * * * *

"My friend the detective," said Amos (it was a long time since he had mentioned this character), "is often helped in his work by a faculty that sometimes strikes others as uncanny prevision, though it is in fact merely intelligent anticipation based on close study of detective stories; but I must admit that I occasionally wonder whether he does not tend to systematize it too much. Thus, it is axiomatic," he proceeded, leaning back and making movements suggestive of feeling for a pair of pince-nez on a wide black ribbon (goodness knows why, for he wears horn-rimmed spectacles all the time)—"it is axiomatic that people with a guilty secret are always holding some small breakable object that can be dropped significantly at a chance (or deliberate) word in the conversation. My friend the detective has a room pullulating with these small breakable objects, china dogs, presents from Scarborough, miniature glass lighthouses, porcelain bells—a room into which at a given stage of any investigation he shepherds all the suspects, simply waiting—this is the pitch to which he's brought the whole system—for those with a guilty secret to pick something up. Those with no guilty secret leave everything alone; it's invariable, he says."

"But surely he knows beforehand," somebody suggested, "that nine out of ten of the suspects have a guilty secret. They always have. If he isn't going to find out what it is—"

Amos shook his head. "I told you," he said. "He

systematizes too much. He has grown to love his technique for its own sake. He prefers to use this elaborate method to establish the identity of those who have guilty secrets and then discover the details by another device which I may be able," he cleared his throat modestly, "to describe to you later."

There were interested cries of "What's *your* guilty secret?" but Amos only smirked and shook his head.

"All I will admit," he said, "is that the object picked up by me was a miniature of the Taj Mahal in the colours of the Mackenzie tartan, inscribed on one side 'A mon's a mon for a' that' and on the other 'Made in Japan.'"

* * * * *

"A fool he undoubtedly is," said Amos, referring to a popular writer of resolute optimism, "but he gets along extremely well on the rent people pay for living in his paradise."

R. M.

o o

Try, Try Again

"Oh, what a tangled web we weave
When first we practise to deceive!"
Success in this, as other spheres,
Comes but to him who perseveres.

o o

"It is recalled that the Mufti was recently ill—or feigned to be ill—and it is thought that this may have enabled him to change his appearance, possibly by shaving off his head."—*Indian paper*.

As good a disguise as any.



Ye Tail

By Smith Minor

IF you have wondered, and you may of, why you haven't read any of my articles lately, it's becorse I haven't written any, and now if you wonder why I haven't written any, being pleased or sorry according to if you like them or not, asking yourself, say,

- (1) Has he been ill?
- (2) Can't he think of any more? Or
- (3) Has the Editer told him to stop?

well, it's not for any of these reasons. Then why? That is what you are now going to hear.

You may remember, if I told you, but not if I didn't, that our Sports-master has always been a bit disappointed in me, he thinking I wuold be good at cricket if I practised more, and once saying,

"Why don't I see you oftener at the nets?"

"Well, sir, I'm generally doing other things," I said.

"What sort of things?" he said.

"To give you two," I said, "thinking and writing."

"Bar!" he said. "The time to write is in class and the time to think is in bed, all the rest shuold go to sport. Why, who knows, you may be a future Hammond."

"Do you really think so, sir?" I said.

"You never can tell," he said, "and imajine how you'd feal captining England! But you won't if you don't practise, so come to the nets this evening and I'll bowl to you."

"I had been going for a walk with Green, sir," I said.

"Oh, then you don't only think and write in your spair time," he said.

"Oh, no, sir," I said, "thouh you can think wile you walk, but I'm also studying goldfish."

Note about goldfish. In case you are interested in them, these members of the carp family, they being, began in China, and came to England in 1691. I haven't found out yet how they came, or what brouht them. End of note about goldfish.

"Well, this evening you're going to study cricket," he said, "and you can bring Green, too."

When I told Green what the S.M.* had said about Hammond, he advised me not to count on it, but thort it was a good idea to try.

"You think there's a chance, then?" I said.

"There's always a chance of every-thing," he said, "but anything's worth doing that will keep you from thinking or writing."

Another note (but only a short one, and there won't be any more). Green is one of those who don't think much of my articles, but he what's called "suffers them," and they don't make any difference to our friendship, nothing cuold. End of another note.

Well, we gave up our walk, wich was going to of been to a tree with three branches that made an outline jest like Yorkshire, I'd wanted to show it to him, and went to the nets insted, and this is what hapened.

The S.M. bowled to me for half an hour and thouh he said I didn't make one what's called scoring stroak, he didn't get me out. But Green, in the next net, made heaps of scoring stroaks, and got out heaps of times. When it was over the S.M. said,

"Smith Minor, you're a puzzle."

"Why?" I said.

"Don't ask me," he said, "you jest are. What are you doing to-morrow evening?"

"Well, sir, I was going to study my goldfish," I said.

"I'd rather you came to the nets again," he said, "and let me study you."

So I did. I ouht to of said before that the S.M. is a very decent person with one of those mustaches you don't mind, and you don't like to disapoint him. And he again bowled to me for half an hour, and again I didn't make a scoring stroak, and again he didn't get me out. And this time he said,

"Smith Minor, we've got to do something about this."

"What can we?" I said.

"Leave it to me," he said, "now I'm going to do a bit of thinking."

You can't get away from it, we were both interested, and in fact I expect you must now be getting to know why I haven't written any articles lately.

Well, we went on like this for nine evenings, no, ten, and then came what you might call Ye Great Test. On the morning of a Second Eleven match a boy named Thwop was trying to catch a letter that had blone out of his hand when he cauth a bee instead. This meant that he cuoldn't hold a cricket bat, and as he was the Eleventh Man

in the Second Eleven, what was to be done? The only person who wasn't in a stue, becorse our school is very kean on cricket, was the S.M., in fact I thort he seamed rather pleased when he came up to me and said,

"Have you heard?"

"Yes, sir," I said.

"Well, Thwop Major drops out and Smith Minor drops in," he said.

"Oh, no, sir," I said.

"Oh, yes, sir," he said. "For nearly a fortnight you haven't made any runs, and you haven't got out, and I want to see if it's really true."

Now, before I tell you what followed, and it was extrordinery, I must tell you one more thing that comes before. It's about Green. He was already in the Second Eleven, being the Tenth Man, but as his avarage was only 2.07 he thort he wuold soon be oosted, wich, to be honest, I'd rather hoped, so he wuold have more time for walks and things. But scince all this net practise, he now doing it every evening too, he'd got keaner, like me, so now we both hoped he wuoldn't be. (Oosted.)

Well, came the afternoon, and came the match, and came our innings, and then, lo! came the moment when the cry of "How zat"

"Rang round the field with awsome din,

With me the next (and last) man in."

I will not harow the reader by discribing what one felt like wile all these things were coming, or when the last had aactually come. If he plays cricket he will know, and if he dose not, no one cuold ever tell him. No, I will jest say what the score was when, to burst into poetry jest once more,

"Looking, Green said, like one at ease,

But aactually quaiing at the knees,"

I walked from the pavillion to the wicket, almost learning in that solenm journey, thouh of corse not quite, what it must be like to walk the planque! Well, anyhow, the score was:

Them	..	109
Us	..	83 for 9 wkts.,

Green being 3 not out, and we having to make 27 more to win.

Now how, one asks, cuold it be done, if indeed it was, the reader not yet knowing, with Green never having

* S.M. = Sports Master. Author

made more than 13 in his life (and don't forget he'd already made 3 of them this innings) and me never having made a scoring stroak?

Well, I took middle, you have to do that, and then all the fielders crouded round me rubbing their hands and licking their chops, of corse I don't mean really doing it, but seaming to. The bowler looked about seven yards high, and after he had swooped towards me at ninety miles an hour, the ball continued the swoop nine times faster than that. But luckerly it didn't hit my wicket, it only hit me, and then it was over.

Note. When it is over in cricket it dosen't mean the cricket is over but the over is over, like this note now being over but not yet the whole article.

So then it was Green's turn, and swiping at everything, he made 10! This brouht his score up to 13, and we now having 17 more to make to win! Golly!

It being my turn again, what wuold hapen now? Cuold I last for six more balls, one asked, and so give old Green another chance? Well, this is what hapened to the six balls, i.e.:

- (1) I blocked it.
- (2) I blocked it.
- (3) It hit me *un peu* hard.
- (4) I blocked it.
- (5) It hit me *un peu* harder.
- (6) It hit me *beaucoupe* harder.

Now, you may of found that dull, but wait till I tell you what hapened to Green's next six balls! Listen! I.e.:

- (1) 2.
- (2) 4.
- (3) 4.
- (4) 4.
- (5) He missed it.
- (6) 6!

And, lo! we had won!!

When the chearing had subsided, becorse of corse they cheared old Green as if he'd been Montgomery, and even me *un soupson*, I said to Green,

"Jolly good swiping, old boy, you saved the match."

"I didn't swipe to save the match, young Smith," he said, "I did it to save your life."

"I see what you mean," I said.

Well, after that, the S.M. made me go on being Eleventh Man, and up to now I've made eight 0 not out's, and while I've been doing it Green has made 132, wich means that between us our avarage is 16.5. I block and he swipes, and we call ourselves Ye Tail.

But our last match was a wash-out throuh rain, and that's how I got time to write this article.



"Post Office? Turn right at the R.S., L.N.E.R., and, fifty paces beyond the T.H., turn half left between the County M. and A.G. and the Municipal P.B. and W.H.—continue past the depot N.F.S. and the local T. of V., and you'll find the P.O. immediately opposite the main gate of the P.P. and R.G."

The Picnic

LIE down, Miss Meager, in the sun,
And let the round-eyed children
run

Like marbles through the shifting
grass.

She opens up her hot gloved hands
And timorously, one by one,
The marble children, pale as glass,
Roll out into the summer lands.

And some roll downwards to the
stream

Whilst others stand in listless dream.
And some, in honeysuckle boats,
Sail out across a sea of oats.

And some take wing and from the
trees

Sing fitful bird-like melodies.

And some, to line their grassy nests,
Take off their ragged coats and
vests

And, peeping through the sorrel
bars,
Mistake the buttercups for stars.

Sleep, now, Miss Meager, in the shade.
Unbutton; do not be afraid.

She shuts her eyes, folds up her
chin

And sleeps. And when she wakes
again

The marbles side by side are laid.
She piles them up and locks them
in

And takes them back to town by train.

O. D.

o o

Flattery Corner

"French gentleman spkg. Engl. wishes to
go au pair in fam. England to perfect him-
self."—Advt. in "Continental Daily Mail."



"And of course the ground rent is extremely moderate."

Parties

I THINK I should begin by telling my readers that I know as well as they do how they don't get invited any more to those partyish parties for which, in the old days, invitation-cards stretched from end to end of their mantelpieces. Or so they like to remind their friends. Actually I suspect that my readers are overdoing it again. The longest line of invitation-cards broke off for the clock or anything that might hide them from their public, and I shouldn't be surprised if the truth was that my readers felt giddily in demand if they had two on the mantelpiece at once, and that they kidded themselves it was all right to leave any very impressive card up for a day or so after it had run out. However, that is in the past. Nowadays any parties that happen tend to do without all this card business, though I am not denying one turns up occasionally, with huge effect on its readers. But what I may call the mental aspects of parties, their demands on human nature, remain the same, and it is on these that I shall concentrate; which is another way of saying that for this article a party may be defined as any number of people lumped together in a room and having to be polite until, it may be, their faces ache.

I think I shall start with the smallest kind of party known to sociologists—one visitor who is no stranger to any member of the household. This cuts out introductions,

but can involve tidying up to the extent of the person who left a litter of sewing around entering the room just in time to be too late to stop someone else putting it away. I mention this because it is interesting that the putter-away is usually the first to apologize. This simple form of tidying includes also ash-trays and patting a pile of magazines until their corners coincide, but not much else. (I leave out those people who, twenty minutes before their visitor is due, are just about finding the penny to twist up the lid of the furniture polish tin, because I have dealt with them before. But I must remind them that if, just as the bell rings, they find they have lost the lid, they should examine the bottom of the tin. Lids fit the bottom of polish-tins even better than the top, and cannot be detected until the polisher is led there by instinct.) Going back to the conventions, I come to the moment when the door-opener has greeted the new arrival, disposed of any theories about earliness or lateness and got rid of any hat or coat with that solicitude which, door-openers tell themselves, they would expect from others. The idea now is not to hang around talking but to get our visitor into the sitting-room, and what is interesting here is that if we chose we could keep our visitor in the hall until it was time to go. It is up to us to make what need be only the faintest mental movement, and not to mind jettisoning a line of talk if there are stairs to be faced round to. The only other thing I want to say about the single visitor is that, what with one person so obviously qualifying for the best arm-chair, the result is often only what psychologists would hope—the chronic occupant back in it, and rather more people than necessary, including the visitor, on the floor.

Now, going to the opposite extreme, for the party where there are enough visitors for the early arrivals to be a welcome sign that people are playing up, the medium arrivals just another ring at the door, and the late arrivals a mix-up with the early departures. This sort of party calls for more than just tidying the sitting-room; it means deciding how radically to move the furniture so as to compromise between frightening people and disappointing anyone who has been specially to the hairdresser. There is a middle path which my readers can find for themselves by roping someone in to disagree with beforehand; but if they start arguing over the pattern of the carpet they will be wasting their time—though perhaps not altogether, because psychologists say that if we grumble at our carpet-pattern before a party there is a strong chance that we shall be using it for an animated discussion before the evening is over.

Besides the early arrivals there is also what I may define as a first arrival, or someone of proved character who has been told to get there in advance. My readers will recall how they have sometimes been what feels like the first arrival at a strange party but have always found at least one other person there, and this is why. (They may even have been chosen themselves for the rôle of first arrival, and felt rather proudly conscious of their usefulness, of their right of entry to the kitchen and even, if they have been told to move a vase, of their moral part-ownership of the flowers.) The next arrivals after this first arrival will be people whose buses went right or something and who are simply being punctual. They will of course apologize for being early, but only because they can hardly apologize for being late and they want something to say as they cross the door-mat; they needn't worry about it any more than they do, and they will have the satisfaction of being introduced all round several times and of having the first arrival as an old friend to turn to for the rest of the evening. My readers will be waiting for me to say something about



"If there's another war, take my tip and don't send YOUR dog to the Army for training."

introductions—about people never hearing other people's names. I feel that this has all been said before, and what I want to mention is how, at a certain stage in a party, the introducer will decide to drop introducing everyone to everyone, and how the company will unconsciously keep step with this decision. It will begin the evening with a kind of drill, shuffling into a semi-circle facing the newcomer; this semi-circle will become gradually bigger and more ragged until all attempts at formation cease, and the only change to come over a room at each new arrival will be a mild eddying from the door inwards. And, while we are dealing with arrivals, I must mention the effect on the newcomer who is still off-stage of the coats that have got there already. Coats at such a time can look more like their owners, and yet more like coats, than at any other.

How do people talk at parties? Well, let my readers think how *they* talk and they will find that their conversations divide more or less into the sort they work up from scratch and the sort they come into ready-made; but even in the second sort they must make a bit of effort. It is not enough, for instance, to be introduced into the back row of a group of eager listeners; they will not feel at ease until they have said something which will link them up with the speaker and thence back to the others, though they don't always actually have to speak, it will count if the speaker turns towards them and they nod, or smile, or look otherwise reciprocal. The opposite sort of conversation, usually held with one other person (who is perhaps a little on the dull side but not to be ungrateful for) may lead to almost any subject but has one common characteristic—that it would want a lot of cutting before

it could count as dialogue, and even then it would be over-opinionated.

I haven't left much space for the smaller and more frequent sort of parties, but I do want to say something about those occasions where there are two visitors who do not know each other, or not very well. It is not considered safe to introduce semi-strangers without a genial reminder that they have met before, because one may remember and the other not, and not to be remembered by someone you remember is, however well you take it, something of a slur on your type of face. Semi-strangers who meet in the house of a friend of both of them are in the interesting position of knowing each other better than they do, and of therefore having to put in a bit of spade-work if left alone while the friend of both of them is getting the coffee in the kitchen. However, if the kitchen is near enough they know they can't stop talking without it being noticed, with the result that by the time the coffee arrives they will have pretty well caught up on their relationship. If they washed up first of course that will have been a great help, I mean apart from being the great help we all know washing up to be to the actual washing-up; because sociologists say that when two people wash up in a strange kitchen, and both put the china back wrong, they have gone some way already towards establishing a relationship which owes nothing to a third party.

o o

"When I look at the programme of development that you have here and the development that is taking place already in relation to the conditions and needs of other Caribbean colonies, it is difficult for me to have my whiskers wrung by the admitted smallness of Trinidad's allocation."—*Trinidad paper.*

Why not wring them by hand?





Jubilee

'TIS fifty years—a decent span—
 Since Britain's Motor Trade began
 An onerous career,
 And now at some convenient date
 It purposes to jubilate,
 Which I, for one, would approbate,
 It will be glad to hear.

Men tell us, they that know the
 past,
 How the proud horse recoiled aghast
 The first rude car to see,
 How our police, a stalwart race,
 Went swooning all around the place,
 With horror on each pallid face
 That this vile Thing should be.

But was the Trade discouraged? Nay,
 Still labouring upward day by day
 With slow but wary power

It something healed the public dread
 And cast the danger-flag of red
 By which its speed was limited
 To some three miles per hour.

To-day how great a change we greet.
 From babe to lorry (sixty feet)
 The stream goes pouring by;
 The traffic cops with lordly air
 Direct them here or halt them there,
 And the scant horses hardly care
 To blink a casual eye.

What store the future yet may hold
 I know not and have not been told;
 My wayward fancies trend
 To those who in pure hate would ban
 All motors as the Curse of Man,
 Which, in my ancient shandrydan,
 I strongly reprehend. DUM-DUM.



THE WAITING ROOM AT THE LUXEMBOURG

"How many is *he* having out, I wonder?"



"I'm afraid the inhabitants are unfavourably impressed with your plans for a satellite town."

The Poet Under Orders

EDITOR. What's wrong? You look positively haggard.
ME. I've just returned from a holiday (staggered).

EDITOR. Do you remember the good old times—?
Please keep them out of your rhymes.
These are the good new times, don't forget.
Er—have you a cigarette?

Boo! you "under-the-counter" pets!
We've been promised more cigarettes.

Oh, up and down the country now the poker-faced
tobacconist,
The gent who sits and glares at you with cold repellent
eye,
Is rubbing up, I like to think, the old technique so sadly
missed:
The mellow charm, the honeyed smile, the mild cork-
tipped reply.

The poker-faced tobacconist whose words are limited to
two—
And oh, the words he leaves unsaid, the things they can
convey!—
I like to think he's standing there inside his shuttered shop
—don't you?—
Rehearsing those sweet phrases that we used to hear
him say.

Good morning, sir. A lovely day. Your usual 100 Come
Again?

Why, certainly, and thank you—ah, how they bring back
to me
The fragrant pure Virginian days, when fags were wrapped
in Cellophane
And my dear Lady Nicotine was all she ought to be.

The poker-faced tobacconist, I see the grim mask crack
and drop,
He glances at his laden shelves, he beams, he pirouettes...
Buoyed up by good Sir Stafford Cripps I bound into the
nearest shop—

"NO CIGARETTES!"

(Any moment now we may be taking you over to a bakery
in Long Acre
For a running commentary on the Food Ministry by a
Master Baker.)

By the way, if you haven't yet had your holiday,
Come to Jollyollyday Camp
At Dullness-on-Damp,
Where every conceivable frolic
Awaits the work-worn and the melancholic.
There are Sun-parks, Fun-parks and Bun-parks.
Swing-bands and colliery bands for music seekers.
Loud-speakers
Tell you what to do
And where to queue

For a shower, a shave, a nice cup of tea,
 The Swim-pool or the sea.
 Camp stewards, wearing a blue fez with a pink tassel,
 Conduct you to the Ice Cream Palace, the Cocoa Castle,
 The "Elevenes" Elysium, the Bower of Beer.
 (Or a Rest Room, if you happen to "come over queer.")
 If it rains and pours
 There are organized games indoors,
 Community leap-frog and other glorious beanos
 In the various Casinos.
 Nothing has been forgotten. We have just added
 Another twenty-five rooms (padded).
 It's simply grand
 Knowing your day is planned,
 That you can relax
 And "leave it to 'Father' Max."
 So get cracking, chaps, don't dally,
 Go book your chalet,
 Be in the Jollyollyday swim
 And join in our 8 o'clock morning hymn:

Hi! Hi! Hi! Hi!
 Only the nearly dead
 Hate to get up in the morning,
 Want to lie abed!
 So up we get, we lucky folk,
 With a Hi de Hi! and a Ho de Ho!
 And a great big "RAH!"

ARE WE ALL HAPPY, CHAPPIE?
 Coo! rather, Father!

Your petrol may fail,
 Travel by Rail.

Spend the early hours of your August holiday at dear old
 Paddington,
 Or equally dear old Euston, King's Cross or Waterloo.
 Join the record holiday crowds, experience the unique fun
 Of being in the world's longest, biggest, most immobile
 queue.
 You will enjoy chatting to our officials, watching the
 mounted police,
 Hearing the joyful shrieks of our locomotives. Truly a
 scene
 For the inspired brush of a Picasso or a Matisse.
 And what if you don't make the 9.5? There's still the
 10.10, the 11.15.

We get you where you want to go
 And get you there express.

G.W.
 L.N.E.
 L.M.S.
 S.

(This is the Light Programme. As soon as our engineer
 has finished his toffee-apple
 We shall be taking you over to the Lords for a talk on
 cricket by Lord Inverchapel.)

Why be burgled? Install in your empty house one of our
 TOUGH TERRIER TERRORS.
 The Breed with the Brain. The Dog that Makes no
 Errors.
 Attacks thieves and furniture-removers but will not go
 for Cops,
 Postmen, Dustmen, Tradesmen, Genuine Callers or "Mrs.
 Mopps"!

The Housebreaker's Headache! Scotland Yard's Anodyne!
 The Dog that can Dial 999!

As you so truly remark, Mrs. Bunsport,
 What would life be without the Weather Report?

As far as can be ascertained, a trough of low pressure
 And an anti-cyclone are rapidly approaching Cheshire.
 (Why not Shropshire? Think, dear reader.) If, as seems
 likely, the trough
 Gets there first, the anti-cyclone will probably beetle
 off
 Somewhere else, possibly the Hebrides, one never can tell
 With these temperamental a-c's. Anyway, it will be as
 well
 To avoid county cricketers if you want it to be fine—
 Especially those bound for Old Trafford. But there is
 every sign
 Of some bright periods, though we cannot of course
 guarantee
 Just where they will operate, or how long they will be.
 It will be cool in the north, warm in the south, becoming
 vice versa.
 Further outlook: unmentionably worse.

Forecast for house-hunters, coal-consumers, BU-students
 and queueing mothers—
 A deep depression is being kicked in the pants daily by the
 Marx Brothers.

(This is the Horses' Educational Broadcast: Should Fillies
 be Treated Rough?

EDITOR. I think that will be enough.)



"There you go, sir, travelling at the speed of light
 out into infinity."

Sporting Notes

(By Captain Haddock)

THERE has been some sharp criticism in sporting circles concerning the behaviour of Lambeth Bill, who will on Friday contest the Haddock Belt for Heavyweights in fifteen rounds with Battling Bert of Portsmouth. The pronouncements of the ex-sailor have strictly conformed to custom and good taste. He has told the world that he is confident of winning; that he will knock out Lambeth Bill in the third or fourth round; that his opponent will never know what hit him; that it would be much better for the Lambeth man if he were run over by an express train; that he will give Bill a boxing lesson, but it will have to be a short one; that Bill is a nice guy, all right, the trouble is he has a punch like a milkmaid; that he hopes after the fight someone will give Bill a good job in a ribbon-shop, because he won't be working with men any more, moreover, he'll need the money. When he has done with Bill, says Bert, he will be ready to meet the World Champion and knock him down in any continent he cares to name. The champion, he admits, can box a bit, but when Bert has hit him once or twice he'll wonder why he took it up.

In contrast, the utterances of the Lambeth man have shown a deplorable tendency towards modesty and even diffidence. At an early stage he shocked his supporters by telling a reporter that he hoped the best man would win. Worse, much worse was to follow. To a startled Press conference he expressed the opinion that Bert was a very good boxer indeed: that that guy certainly knew how to use his hands; that it would take a good man to beat him; that he would do his best, but he was not staking any large sums on his chances, nor would he advise his best friends to do so. About his plans for the fight, he said that he did not expect to knock Bert out, since his defence was very strong and he had a jaw like Gibraltar. He had some hope, however, of winning on points. Asked, if, in the event of a win, he would challenge the World Champion, he blushed and said shyly that he did not believe in eating his chickens before they were hatched. My sporting colleagues, I am informed, were so disgusted by these unmanly pronouncements that, for the good name of the sport, they agreed not to repeat them. I think myself that this is a mistaken view. Exposure is the proper reward and remedy for

unworthy behaviour in every department of life, and it is in that spirit that I publish the horrid facts.

Since these words were written, the Lambeth man, I understand, has said that he is fond of reading and likes looking at scenery.

* * * * *

Better news, however, from the greyhound race-tracks, where every meeting shows new and encouraging signs of virility. There is no namby-pamby notion about "the best dog winning" in the crowded enclosures here, and the sporting crowd are persuaded that it is equally absent from the minds of those in charge. It follows that directors, managers, trainers and even judges are united in a conspiracy to defraud the honest sportsmen whose money is on losing dogs. To that, of course, armed force is the only reply, and armed attack inevitably begets new strength and ingenuity in the defence. It will be some time, it is feared, before racing is resumed at Popstow, where masked men, indignant at the defeat of *Baa Lamb*, attacked the Grand Stand with flame-throwers and burned it to the ground. The directors, who, it seems, had made no preparation for such an assault, have come in for some severe and well-deserved censure. Elsewhere, happily, wiser heads have been ready for the modern trend. At Wimhurst and Seldon the judges' boxes have been built of three-foot concrete, with embrasures cunningly sited for machine-guns, from which a wicked cross-fire can be directed at any sportsmen who attempt to cut through the barbed-wire defences. At Haleham and Edgeton tanks patrol the centre of the ground throughout the meeting, and marines, with hand-grenades, protect the totalisator girls. At Marrowby, where a habit had sprung up of shooting the leading dog with revolvers (in one case with poisoned darts), the races are now run in a subterranean tunnel, and the dogs do not emerge into the open until they have passed the winning-post. At Muckleton helicopters hover over the enclosures from which hostile movements by armed bands or individuals can be readily detected and reported by radio to the waiting tanks. All this shows the very lively and healthy condition of the sport.

* * * * *

I feel that I must draw the attention of my readers to a remarkable example

of private enterprise and planning of which I read in my favourite paper *The Racing Calendar*. Here I find full particulars of a race which is to be run at the Sandown Park Spring Meeting in 1949—the Sandown Park Stud Produce Stakes. More than seventy colts, geldings, and fillies have been entered for this race, and the course, I understand, is to be greatly enlarged. The names of the colts, geldings and fillies are not given; for they are to run "at two years old," and a lightning calculation will show that they are not yet born. But the names of their fathers and mothers are given, and very fine reading they are. *Nearco* is to be the father of no fewer than eighteen of the little competitors, *Straight Deal* of twelve, *Orestes* eleven, *Hyperion* and *Owen Tudor* ten, and *Lambert Simnel* nine. It is a fascinating exercise to invent good names for the produce of some of these unions, though one cannot get far without knowing whether it is to be a colt or a filly. The only thing is to think of two names.

How, for example, ingenious reader, would you name the following colts (or fillies):

Mother	Father
Exhibitionist	Diplomat
(? Open Treaty)	
Charwoman	Nearco
(? Master Mopp)	
Clarapple	Sol Oriens
(? Cox's Orange)	
Star of Ceylon	Straight Deal
(? Southern Cross)	
Sparkle	Ocean Swell
(? White Horse)	
Mesalliance	Signal Light
(? Forever Amber)	
Superb	Fairway
(? St. Andrew)	
Golf Widow	Full Bloom
(? Widow's Mite)	
Coin of the Realm	Ocean Swell
(? Wet Bob)	

No prizes are offered. But the hearts of all of us go out to our forward-looking Jockey Club. Who says Conservatives can't plan? A. P. H.

Digestive Fiction Racket Exposed

ANOTHER thing I have learned about writing is that a novel is much more likely to succeed if it will condense conveniently—I mean, if it is suitable for compression into one of the great "digests." Once you can get a majority group of

associate editors to believe in your book, to see it as a four- or five-page spread in their magazine, you are on the road to fame or fortune. A bit of your novel will then be read by millions of people who will await your next publication with lively anticipation. But you must produce this follow-up novel quickly enough, that is before the condensation has evaporated from the reader's mind. And if fame is your spur you must at all costs prevent this second child of your fertile brain from being seen by the associate editors as another four- or five-page spread.

Of course if you care more for profit you won't mind if all your novels are condensed. In fact you will write them with condensation in view. Now opinions differ about how this should be done. One school (which must be nameless) contends that the purple passages should be written first and the rest of the novel, the material unsuitable for condensation, packed round them. Good results are obtained, it is said, where this residual matter is printed in some foreign language or in diamond type. The second school ("Write Lasting Prose as a Spare-time Hobby") says that the novel should be written straight through without any thought for the digests, but that the author should appeal

directly to associate editors in a foreword—like this:

"This may well be the only unexpurgated edition of *Black Kettle* to appear in print—and a very limited edition at that. Thus the grim story of Mona Shelborne and its important lessons for our time will probably have little impact on public opinion. Though modesty prevents the author from saying so, this would be little short of a tragedy. The matter destined for the expurgatorial scissors are the paragraphs in chapter three describing the events leading up to the departure of Mona from Sackville Farm and the bit about the atom bomb on page 137. No part of this book may be reproduced without the permission and signed receipt of the author."

There is one kind of condensation which has a great future, I think. Look at this:

THEY CAME, THEY SAW . . .

Condensed from the forthcoming Novel by

ALMA ARKWRIGHT.

This sort of thing is going to do for the pen what the 40-hour week, scientific management, profit-sharing and improved canteens are doing for manual labour. We writers are going to get a square deal at last. You see the

idea? You write your condensation, get it printed in a digest, test the public's reactions by the number of orders put through at the book-sellers, and then decide whether to go ahead with the rest of the book or not. The saving in time and energy is enormous. And if you should experience a twinge of conscience about the use of that word "forthcoming," put "projected" instead.

So don't throw away your old unacceptable manuscripts. Brighten them up with a gay condensation and see how the digests respond. If the condensation succeeds, work it into the novel somehow and get the whole thing typed out afresh. And make sure that the names of your characters in the condensation match those in the novel.

I am quite sure that the condensation has come to stay: it is so obviously the right kind of reading-matter for people brought up on dried eggs, dehydrated milk, tabloid newspapers, canned music and self-contained flatlets. Don't you agree that one of the chief pleasures left to us in this age of unreason is to curl up in a comfortable arm-chair with a good condensation? (Condensed from *Five Stars in Henrietta Street*, Harpenden Mercury.)

HOD.



"I say, do you mind not holding me as we go past these girls?"

At the Play

"MARRIAGE À LA MODE" (ST. JAMES'S)

THE opening lines of the first lyric tell us how things are at the court of Sicily with *Rhodophil*, Captain of the Guard, and his *Doralice*, after two years of married life:

*Why should a foolish marriage vow,
Which long ago was made,
Oblige us to each other now
When passion is decayed?*

Presently a full quartet is tangled in one of the amorous miz-mazes dear to a Restoration dramatist. This witty skirmishing could fill the play, but DRYDEN must complicate matters with another plot, an exercise in the romantic-heroic (here he nods across the years at Beaumont and Fletcher), all about a lost Prince and Princess, a proud usurper, and a sneering favourite. It is the custom to dismiss this amiable idyll as child's play, rhyme without reason, and indeed it is; but as staged at the St. James's it pleasantly varies the more sophisticated comedy. *Leonidas* and his *Palmyra* serve as a silverying of moonshine upon a piece that at heart is a midsummer night's dream among the cypresses and grottoes, the colonnades and lawns and arbours, and the glimmering pools of the Sicilian court.

Mr. JOHN CLEMENTS, the producer, has refused—and rightly—to be portentous about anything. The foundling-lovers—the girl is several removes from Perdita—are treated as gently romantic decorations, and the last scene runs almost into light opera. Mr. DAVID PEEL and Miss MOIRA LISTER, Stratford's *Romeo* and *Juliet* of 1945, have grown in confidence, and with the help of Mr. JAMES MILLS's *Polydamus* (a vigorous and transforming attack upon an awkward part) they manage to reconcile us to the silken meanderings.

But *Marriage à la Mode* rests of course upon the imbroglio of its wit-crackers. Much of the dialogue has the proper flash-and-outbreak; some is only "the thin leaf-gold of wit, the very wafers and whipped cream of

sense." It is all diverting, and Mr. ROBERT EDDISON (*Rhodophil*) and Miss FRANCES ROWE (*Doralice*) carry it off especially well: each has the air and the grace. Mr. CLEMENTS is more at ease, one feels, in a modern idiom, but his *Palamede*—courtier returned from travel—is ever an agreeable rake. One is less happy about the *Melantha*. This young woman who views the world through French windows—opening on a foam of perilous words—is a flashing jewel of a part: Miss KAY HAMMOND's sugar-plum voice (some-

a saucepan. Mr. HARKER, bowler-hatted and wry-lipped, escapes the saucepan, but bells ring out to the wild sky, the walls resound with knocking ("How is't with me when every noise appals me?"), a book-case sways, chandeliers spin, vases are levitated, and the writing-desk dissolves in smoke. Murmuring "Rest, rest, perturbed spirit"—or words to that effect—Mr. HARKER hurls at the Unseen with a creosote spray and a faulty fire-extinguisher. Thenceforward it is doubtful whether Mr.

HARKER is more alarmed by the poltergeist than the poltergeist by Mr. HARKER.

This early-morning frolic with the supernatural is the crest of a play that hovers oddly between the serious and the comic. Mr. FRANK HARVEY junior seems to have taken hints from the Epworth poltergeist ("old Jeffrey," the Wesleys' visitant, turns into "old Godfrey") and from the disturbances at Borley Rectory. The "possession" of the vicar's daughter might have been the core of a serious psychological inquiry, but—happily no doubt—nothing can be serious when Mr. GORDON HARKER is facing the viewless things of air with all the delight of a non-swimmer in the North Cornish surf on a stormy day in October.

The play is happier in all senses when Joe Harris of Clapton is about. This husky, pint-of-bitter Cockney with his expressive eye-work and his telling pauses, is the heart and soul of Long Barrow Vicarage during his brief occupa-

tion. Mr. LLOYD PEARSON, the vicar—known to Mr. HARKER as "a stiff-collar job"—is as able in bewilderment and irritation as his wife (Miss OLGA LINDO) in apprehension; Miss OLIVE KIRBY, their possessed daughter, is (so far as one can judge) uncomfortably accurate; and Miss JACQUELINE CLARKE, as the clumping daily, sets the village firmly on the edge of Dartmoor. We gather that the stray occultist—Mr. AUSTIN TREVOR puts a nice edge on a dullish part—will go later to St. Ives to view a hopeful Cornish case. Without the enlivening presence of Mr. HARKER to harass the poltergeist, one fears that he may find it more than a little slow. J. C. T.



GRACEFUL PHILANDERERS

<i>Palamede</i>	MR. JOHN CLEMENTS
<i>Melantha</i>	MISS KAY HAMMOND
<i>Rhodophil</i>	MR. ROBERT EDDISON

times muffled) hardly fits DRYDEN's elegancies. Although *Melantha's* pouting effrontery is often delicious, her lines need to be poised and pointed. Mr. LAURENCE IRVING's sets and Miss ELIZABETH HAFFENDEN's costumes are richly pictorial, and from Mr. CLEMENTS's inventive production one would omit only the stammering messenger.

"THE POLTERGEIST" (VAUDEVILLE)

At one point during the third act of this comedy Mr. GORDON HARKER muses upon the lot of a respectable insurance assessor who must sit up all night (with a packet of corned-beef sandwiches) waiting to be hit by



"Ay, Oi've seen some changes since Oi were ninety-nine."

Soap

IT is not every day that one finds a recipe for making soap. Normally I think I would never have bothered about it, because my hobby is bee-keeping. But we have all been getting rather tired of using scrappy little bits of soap in the bathroom, and I reasoned that it would be a pleasant surprise if I could present my wife with a bar out of the blue as it were.

Apparently one made this soap in the remoter parts of Wales, but this point seemed to be hardly a fundamental part of the recipe. The essential ingredient was bracken. We are fortunate in having a fairly large wood at the end of our garden, and I knew that bracken grew there in profusion. I therefore collected a substantial armful, brought it back to our bonfire site, and burnt it. It was still a little moist after our June weather, but I waited in some excitement until the flames had died down and I could poke about with a stick among the residue. The actual

wording of the recipe was "The light greyish-white ash is then collected, moistened with water, and compressed into cakes or balls."

It was surprising to discover how very little ash such a large bundle of bracken could produce, and I was on the point of examining it in some detail when a small gust of wind blew most of it away. Something told me that I must have made a mistake somewhere. "Bracken is cut (said the recipe) in enormous quantities."

It is a strange fact that even such a mundane occupation as soap-making can grip one almost to the point of excitement. I spent most of the afternoon in journeys to and from the wood, staggering under great armfuls of bracken, until a cloud of smoke of almost Bikini proportions rose above the garden, often enveloping me before it did so.

The fire must have been burning for almost three hours before I watched

my last bundle disintegrate into what I hoped would be greyish-white ash. Certainly there was a quite respectable deposit, and when it had cooled sufficiently I raked it carefully into a pail and moistened it with water.

It made only a small cake of soap, but I felt a glow of creative pride surging through me. It was only as I carried it reverently indoors that I realized my urgent need of the very commodity I had manufactured. A glance in the mirror left me with no doubts on that issue. There were bits of bracken protruding from my hair, while my face resembled that of a Commando after battle.

There was a very small piece left when I had finished washing. In fact it was so minute that I felt rather ashamed of showing it to anybody, so I put it in the dust-bin. On the whole, it was a disappointing afternoon, especially as my suit will have to be sent to the cleaners.



"No, we have no cricket boots, and yes, you DO need coupons for them."

Our Booking-Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

Sir Samuel Hoare in Spain

LORD TEMPLEWOOD, formerly Sir Samuel Hoare, is preparing several volumes of memoirs, and in his introduction to *Ambassador on Special Mission* (COLLINS, 16/-) gives an illuminating sketch of his family. The Hoares are the oldest banking family in the City of London; they were Oliver Cromwell's bankers, but did not allow this association to obliterate the humanitarian strain which distinguished them throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. A good scholar and athlete, practised in politics and inheriting from his Quaker forbears a sagacious preference for negotiation rather than for combat and an inexhaustible capacity for waiting on events and avoiding precipitate action, Sir Samuel Hoare was particularly well equipped for the position of Ambassador in Madrid from May 1940 until the late autumn of 1944. He reached the Spanish capital at the worst moment of the war. France was collapsing; it looked as if nothing could prevent the Mediterranean from falling into the hands of Hitler and Mussolini; Malta, Suez and Gibraltar seemed to be as good as lost. Even the personal safety of Sir Samuel Hoare appeared precarious, for the Gestapo permeated Madrid, and General Franco was so contemptuous of England and certain of an Axis victory that it was impossible to reckon on his intervention if kidnapping the British Ambassador should happen to strike Germany as a good

notion. How Sir Samuel Hoare threaded a maze which led at last to a safe and open high road is the theme of this clear, well-proportioned and extremely interesting book.

H. K.

"Everybody's Talkin' 'bout Stackalee."

Nothing—even the government—is so much of the people by the people and for the people as folk-lore. In fact, more often than not, folk-songs and folk-tales are the people's way of getting even with the government. It is therefore highly to the credit of Mr. B. A. BOTKIN, President of the American Folklore Society, that he has not overloaded *The American People in their Stories, Legends, Tall Tales, Traditions, Ballads and Songs* (PILOT PRESS, 12/6) from its richest source, the plantation, but has allotted most of the field to the poor white. England has encountered fragments of his earliest treasure-trove: in Bret Harte, in Mark Twain—even in Dickens. Some of it is ours too—as Cecil Sharp discovered in the Appalachians. But America is still sturdy enough to operate an unpaid indigenous Muse; and railways, mines, lumber-camps—even New York slums—are still piling up new numbers on the lines of "Haile Selassie" and "Little Moron." There is still hope for a people that can entertain itself; and perhaps this rousing book will inspire a British anthology, winding up not only with service songs but with plantation choruses like the Vale of Clwyd Farmers' hymn to their War Agricultural Committee.

H. P. E.

Osbert Sitwell

The Scarlet Tree (MACMILLAN, 15/-) is the second volume of Sir OSBERT SITWELL's autobiography. As the first volume covered only eight years of his life, and this one covers ten, from his eighth to his eighteenth year, the stream of his memories is flowing a little faster, though it is still a long way from the rapids. A more concentrated method would produce more poignant pictures of the past, but the method adopted has a mournful charm, and the panorama as it unrolls is lit up with many gleams of poetry and humour. The volume opens with the arrival in London of the youthful Osbert, his brother and sister. The Edwardian age was just opening; the horse was still the god of the capital, and "the staccato tapping of hoofs the appropriate and jaunty music of London." Brothers who are deeply attached to one another seldom find school congenial, and the author cordially disliked his first school, at Scarborough, the headmaster of which was "a bearded man with the happy but puzzled expression of a resolute and vigorous bore." His second school proved even less enjoyable. It was a boarding-school, and a boarding-school to the author is a "place of trimensual internment." At Eton, through accidentally turning his pea-shooter on a master, he acquired a reputation for recklessness which soon faded. Though not happy at Eton, he is dispassionate about it, and ends with a moving tribute to his contemporaries, many of whom were killed in the war of 1914.

H. K.

"Then We Had Another One."

Oddly enough—for the first is so very French and the second so very English—M. LOUIS ARAGON's *Aurélien* (PILOT PRESS, 12/6) recalls a famous music-hall chorus of the last century. It is women, however, not drinks, that are celebrated here; but women from what one might call the drink point of view. All the novel's descriptive subtlety, and all its translator's accomplished way with it, go for little in this Parisian inter-war jungle where company-promoters stalk actresses, and poets their friends' wives,

and none of the characters are bigger than their appetites. A small circle dominates a large canvas. The hero's career was interrupted by 1914. At thirty he is living on his dividends and pursuing a country chemist's wife, the cousin of his friend Edmond Barbentane. Edmond, who owns a taxi syndicate and a rich mate, aspires to succeed the late Gabriele D'Annunzio in the graces of an actress whose husband is a small doctor. You meet "the world's greatest drummer" and see a fight of drunken Yankees and negroes amid the Moorish décor of Montmartre. The philanderers trot round to their variously-shuffled assignments like the curates in *Shirley*. On page 139 Aurélien "suddenly felt tired of all this feminine zoology." So did the reviewer—and with over six hundred pages still to go.

H. P. E.

Coastwise Ships

Mr. HUMFREY JORDAN's new book, *Landfall Then Departure* (HODDER AND STOUGHTON, 9/6), and it is a very fine one, is the story of unbroken tradition in the lives of a family of ship-owners. We first meet the Hoys in Victorian days when Simon, owner of a small coaster trade fleet, is refusing to be bought out by a big steamship company, and we say goodbye to them sadly at the end of the late war. The book is packed with many interests—human, shipping and trade, and contains a lot of philosophy. The Hoys, though they clung to the coast trade because "the old coaster companies preserve the spirit of tribes," were progressive as a family and, even in the baddish Victorian days, maintained that good feeding was a necessity for seamen and that accommodation for them and for firemen was a national disgrace. The story carries us through several generations, contains a good picture of Dunkirk, and describes events of the last war sanely and without sentimentality. The best chapter of all tells of the behaviour of a bad ship in rough weather, her crew's disgust when she gave up fighting, and the very interesting reactions of the two owners. There is no space here to consider the plot, which combines fact and history in a most readable story, or the characters whom we grow to know and to love. Mr. JORDAN is to be congratulated again.

B. E. B.

Darwinian

Mr. BERNARD DARWIN, in his *Golfing By-Paths* (COUNTRY LIFE, 10/6), is pleased to classify himself among "us ordinary golfers." This, it will be observed, from one who has known many high championships and played in the Walker Cup competition. But perhaps after all he is an "ordinary golfer" at heart; for when dealing with what he calls the esoteric mystery of golf he is just as entertaining to the third-rate player as he must be to the star. His reminiscences are always agreeable, his reflections wise. Instructive, too, though he disclaims the "atrocious crime of teaching golf." His present book is made up of those articles of his that have gladdened the readers of *Country Life*, and they bind up so well, without a trace of patchiness, that it can equally well be read straight through or opened anywhere. Here is an essay on Style, there a talk on the dreadful disease of socketing, or one on that distressing joint the right elbow. Illustrious names crop up all through; even Mr. Winkle appears for too brief a moment. We are told of many classic courses. Some odd ones, too; there were seven in Macedonia, of one of which he was the proud architect. Two items come to the mind. There was a northern course where troops were forbidden to drill because they interfered with golf, and a first-rate player boasted to Mr. DARWIN that he had been out of bounds at

Hoylake off every tee but one where the achievement was impossible. One remembers, too, a hostile boy-caddy whose audible prayers proved a severe handicap. There is pleasure to be found in a not unsympathetic chapter on throwing about one's clubs. But the whole book is pleasurable, particularly so perhaps to the wistful player who for some time past has been unable to take his clubs out on to the green.

J. K.

Blind Interlude

The Dark Descent (ROUTLEDGE, 8/6) is a remarkable first novel by Miss MORWENNA DONNELLY, a young writer who has already won distinction as a poet. It is very much a poet's work. Her heroine is a painter who, on losing her sight, has cut her life drastically at its roots; she has left her family's estate, broken off her engagement and settled with an old nannie in a small house on a common near London. Her motive is not unselfishness and her purpose not martyrdom; she has an inner compulsion to sort out her new condition in a neutral harbour. The story, which, though it deals largely with her changing states of mind is free both of the psychological jargon and the sentimentality which would have spoiled it, recounts her endeavour to find herself again, her life being varied only by the visits of an understanding vicar and by those of a mysterious young man. In the latter case the clarity of Miss DONNELLY's plan breaks down; being too intent on avoiding the obvious, she leaves us instead irritatingly in the dark, for we are given just enough about this mysterious person, who is uncannily informed locally and yet unknown, to wish to be told outright which of our guesses about him is correct. In the end Harriet's sight comes back, and her odyssey to Wales and her reunion with Gervase are beautifully described. This book will not be the choice of those who like action for action's sake, but for its delicately balanced use of English, its sensibility, and its sympathetic projection of the significance of blindness to an artist it deserves more than passing praise.

E. O. D. K.

The Inimitable Wodehouse

Mr. P. G. WODEHOUSE's latest is as brilliant as any of its predecessors, though not quite so funny. One admires more and laughs less. Like all his comedy, *Money in the Bank* (HERBERT JENKINS, 8/6) depends on an almost universal guilty conscience, or at least an uneasy one. Sooner or later, and for excellent reasons, even his most virtuous characters find themselves in the embarrassing position of being unable to tell the truth, and from this grow the delightfully preposterous situations. When old Lord Uffenham hides the diamonds that represent the entire capital of his niece and himself he is merely doing what he pleases with his own. But when his house is let and he has forgotten just where in that house he hid the diamonds, there is nothing he can do but stay on as butler in order to carry on the search. Unfortunately, others are searching too, among them two bogus private detectives and a couple who shelve their share-pushing to join in the hunt. Over this household of underground activities presides the alarming figure of Lord Uffenham's tenant, a woman who is used to quelling wild beasts and savage tribes and who is at present having unexpected trouble in popularizing the health-recipes of the Ugubu. The stage is thus set with the equivalent of three sub-plots in Shakespeare rolled into one (or one in Gilbert), and the fun consists in watching Mr. WODEHOUSE work them out. Though the slang to-day sounds a trifle forlorn, like the echoes of a vanished world (even if it never existed), the technique is as inimitable as Jeeves.

J. S.

Pink Ribbons for Clio

I HAVE been thinking for some time of writing an historical novel. Nothing really accurate, you know, but the sort that the people who are in touch with modern thought turn out, showing how even back then they had dictators and left wing progressives and right wing reactionaries and a common man who was tremendously forward-looking and steadily coming into his own.

Of course I'm not going to write too much about statesmen and aristocracy, because we all know now (at least, we don't know it, but we kind of let ourselves absorb it) that it wasn't those people who meant anything at all. It was the common man, surging forward in a democratic way, who made any of the history we can be pleased about; and it doesn't matter what they thought about it then; what one's got to do is to see history in the light of what we (that is, those of us who want to be thought progressive and forward-looking) think now.

This makes it a bit difficult about Nelson. Of course we all know now that being C-in-C. isn't really more important than being one of the common fighting-men. But in Nelson's time they hadn't got our enlightenment. Though, after all, perhaps this won't really matter, as the family whose fortunes will be followed through the book will be brimming over with our enlightenment and can slip in the right comment.

I hadn't mentioned this family before, but of course you've realized that there must be a family typifying the common man with the democratic and so forth outlook. They have to be Yorkshire sheep-farmers, because the north are so democratic and forthright, as every child can repeat in its cradle, and wool is so important in our history, and the south are very tolerant and haven't ever objected to the north getting the credit for all our history. So far.

I think I shall have to start in the reign of Richard II. It's a bit far back, but I can always skip a few reigns in between. And I must have Richard, because he was a pacifist and only pushed into an imperialist war by a reactionary aristocracy. And he was especially for the common man, like Wat Tyler, if only They'd let him

alone. This ought to set the key-note of the book nicely. I know pacifism isn't quite on the up-grade yet, but by the time the book's finished and published it'll probably be back in real favour again, and one does want to write what's being thought now and in the future, doesn't one?

Well, I expect you've got the idea by now. Take Elizabeth. Elizabeth is left wing progressive (because of the Poor Law and only burning reactionaries); and then there's Philip who's an absolute gift because he's Spain and a dictator and (therefore) right wing reactionary, which is just blissfully parallel with now, isn't it? But of course that's only background, and the thing I shall concentrate on is the common man (second son of the current sheep-farmer) who is the real glory of the reign by being very exploratory abroad, which was very forward-looking indeed and one of the

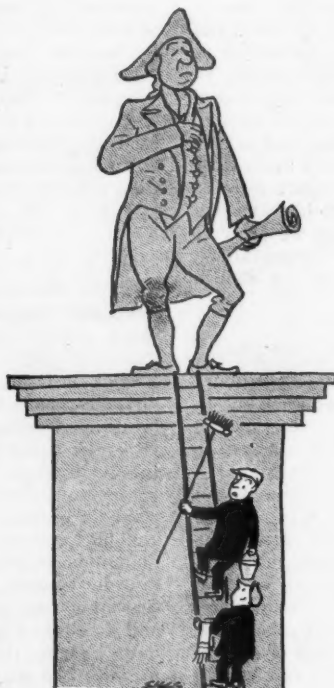
great Adventures of Democracy, which is the spirit we want to-day.

Or take Wellington and Napoleon. Now over this I can be really rather subtle, because I can bring in the bit about the English being so wrong always, which is a very progressive thing to think, by making Napoleon a left wing progressive whose wistful ideal it was to make a United States of Europe, but then he was opposed by Wellington who was the worst kind of right wing reactionary, and therefore Napoleon became a dictator because of the terrific disappointment.

All this time of course the sheep-farmers will be sheep farming and living a real, wide kind of life on the dales and moors and making tremendously forward-looking remarks like: "One day, my son, there will be a national insurance scheme which will embrace every man, woman and child in the country," and "One day, my daughter, women will be paid to have children," and "One day, my son, a Trade Union leader will be Foreign Secretary." And the children will reply dutifully: "We always say, father, that you see further than most." (In the book this will all take place in broad Yorkshire, but I haven't looked it up yet.) And of course there'll be a lot about economic difficulties and other economic things like the Tolpuddle Martyrs and those.

There are two periods, though, which worry me rather. First there's Cromwell. Now Cromwell was obviously a dictator; but because he was opposed to Charles I, a right wing reactionary if ever there was one, Cromwell must be left wing progressive. It's a very difficult problem, though I dare say I can twist it round somehow. And then there's Queen Anne's reign; and I think I shall have to leave that out altogether. Because, you see, the Tories suddenly come out as a Peace Party, which won't do at all; and worst of all, the common man threw out the Duke of Marlborough as soon as they were sure he'd won the war for them. And then, not having anyone around who knew much about anything, they made a pretty dim kind of peace.

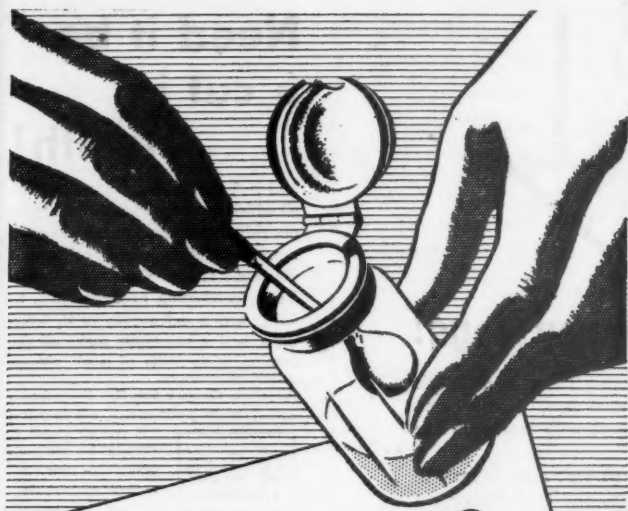
And no one would think me progressive if I drew a parallel like that.



"No, you wash and I'll dry."

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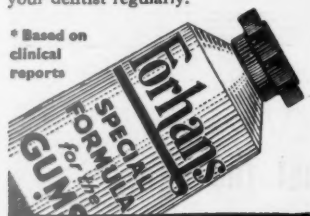


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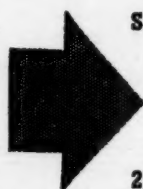
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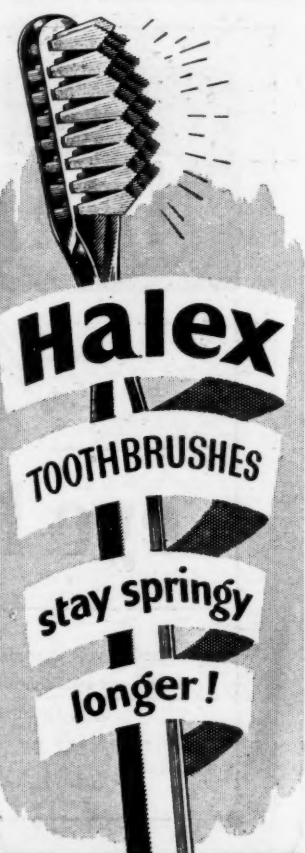
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